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Gallery and Studio

EMILE VAN MARCKE.

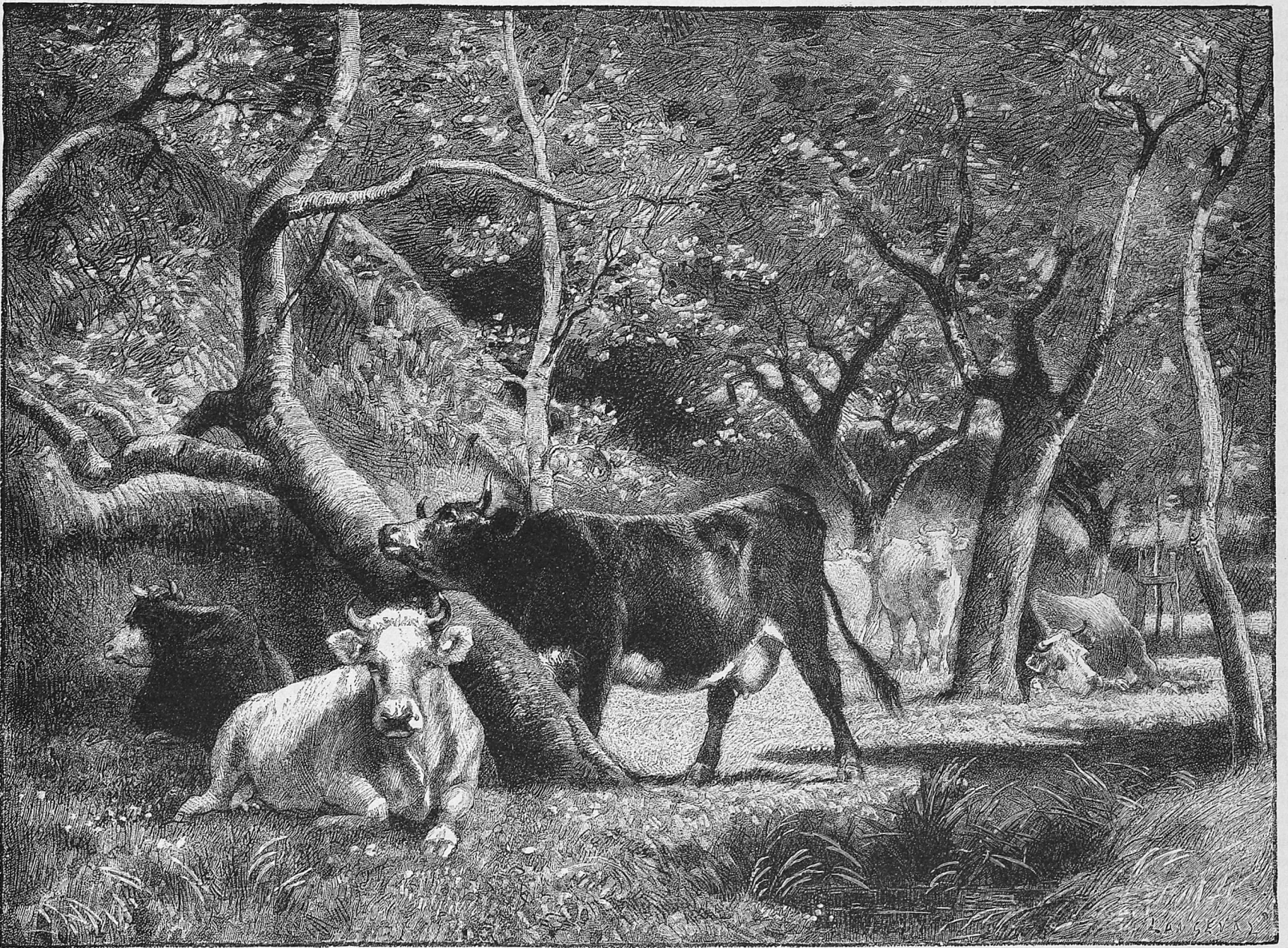
PERHAPS it is something in the painting of Van Marcke, as well as his name, that has led many to consider him a Hollander. He is, nevertheless, of French birth, having been born at Sèvres in 1829; and, being a pupil of Troyon, he should fully belong to the French School. But blood has, in his case, more force than nativity or education. He is of Flemish extraction. His

things, several large pieces in *pâte-tendre* which were presented by the French Government to the Queen of Holland and other European sovereigns. Thus he has never known any other life than that of art, and probably would find it difficult to conceive himself as capable of leading any other.

Such are not the best conditions in which to develop a striking originality. Yet we are told that those early works were marked by a vigor not at all common in those days; and that, in fact, he brought about a revolution in porcelain-painting, substituting for the allegorical subjects done in weak tints and stipple which prevailed before him, cattle pieces and landscapes broadly executed, which have since been frequently imitated. These porcelains of Van Marcke are now sought after

de Villeneuve-l'Étang," which was much talked about. Since then he has every year exhibited one or more pictures. His subjects are always simple—Norman pastures, flat meadows, slow-flowing streamlets, with cattle grazing or couched, and chewing the cud. In this country Van Marcke's pictures are much sought for. The following views were expressed by that excellent critic, the late "Edward Strahan" (Earl Shinn), in noticing* "La Source de Neslette," painted for the Salon of 1877 and now in the collection of Mr. Alexander Brown of Philadelphia:

"Van Marcke, in this very striking picture, manifests art that verges on artifice. The juxtaposition of the black and white cows resembles the way in which a goldsmith lets his black and white enamels play off



"HERBAGE À SORENG" (SEINE-INFÉRIEURE). AFTER THE PAINTING BY ÉMILE VAN MARCKE.

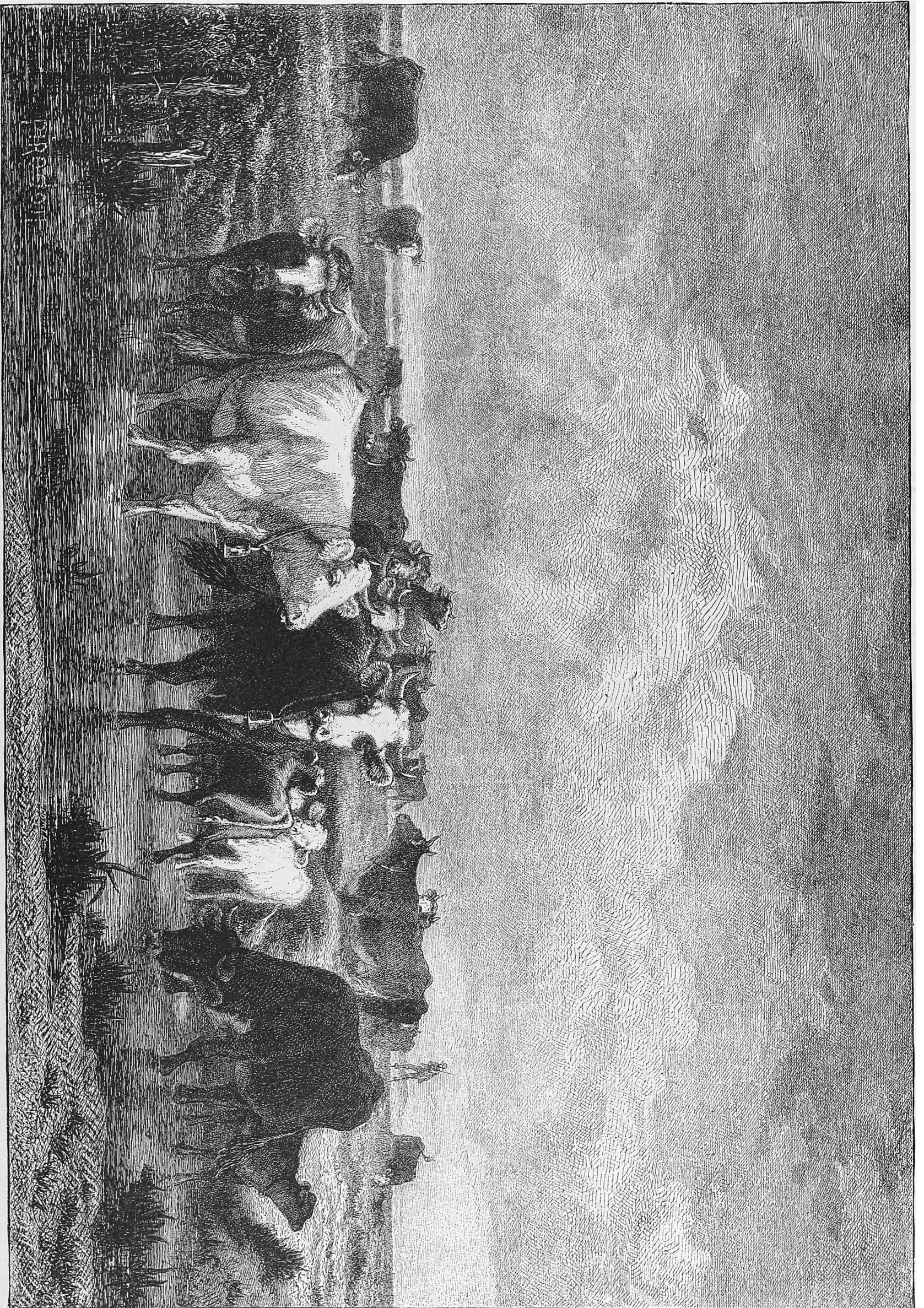
IN THE W. H. VANDERBILT COLLECTION,

family were originally of Brussels, so that he comes naturally by the somewhat heavy touch which most distinguishes him from his master. Both his father and mother were painters; the former a pupil of Watelet, of landscapes; the latter of flowers. As soon as he could hold a crayon their son was put to the study of art, and all through his academical career he was made to consider painting as the end and crown of his education. His education finished, he married into the family of another painter, M. Louis Robert, long attached to the manufactory of Sèvres. He soon entered into the factory himself, decorating, among other

more eagerly than his pictures on canvas. It is not pretended that Van Marcke arrived at this degree of perfection as a porcelain-painter without study. He was already noted for quick and correct drawing before leaving the Academy of Liege. He studied hard to acquire a full knowledge of the use of enamel colors, and placed himself under the tuition of Troyon, whose father had been employed at the Sèvres manufactory. It was under his direction that he began the painting of animals, in which genre he has become famous. His debut at the Salon was made in 1857, when he exhibited a landscape with animals, "Environs

against each other on the jewel. Fine as the painting is, and incontestable as is the force with which the artist makes the accidents of nature bend to his will, the hypercritical spectator might complain that the incidents of the composition are evidently arranging themselves for effect. Such an over-intensity of emphasis and obvious rhetoric of forcible antithesis might be held to spoil a little the proper pastoral impression, the essence of which is simplicity. The objects of the country are here stamped with the evident impression of

* The Art Treasures of America, Vol. III., p. 71. Philadelphia: George Barrie.



"LANDES DU VASSIN D'ARCACHON (GIRONDE)." FROM AN ETCHING BY PIRODON, AFTER THE PAINTING BY ÉMILE VAN MARCKE.

the trained city mind, and the fields seem at once to lose a portion of their innocence. The silvery white of the nearest heifer, who elongates her neck to be caressed by the tongue of the fond dowager in black velvet, is relieved with determined art by the contrast of the farther animal and by the most ornamental vignettes into which a complexity of crooked old oaks can be twisted. A magpie perches at the right on the bit of fence picturesquely dilapidated. Singularly able, the picture is singularly wanting in naïveté. Before this specimen of Van Marcke, in which the delighted painter seems to vaunt the very highest reach of his art, we are constrained to record his incurable ponderous mannerism, and to sigh for the single-hearted love of nature observable in Troyon or in Auguste Bonheur."

It may be said that Van Marcke derives his technique, and, with the reservation already made, his spirit even from Troyon. But it need hardly be said that to be able to continue the work of Troyon he must have great qualities. He knows the animals which he paints, their anatomy, their structure, their character, intimately. His coloring is warm, solid and vigorous, though never quite so harmonious as Troyon's sometimes is. His habit is to paint from nature, with his models before him. Hence, though he has had "studios" in Paris, it has been noticed that a painting under way was never to be seen in them. His work is done in the country.

Van Marcke received medals at the exhibitions of 1867, 1869, 1870 and 1878, the latter, the year of the "Exposition Universelle," first-class. He was named Chevalier of the Legion of Honor in 1872. Among the most noteworthy of his pictures are the following: "La Falaise," which was in the Salon of 1876; "La Source de Neslette," already noticed; "Le Gue de Monthiers," 1878; "Herbage à Soreng," 1879, now in the Vanderbilt collection; "Landes du Vassin d'Arachon," "Charroyeurs de Sable à St. Jean de Luz," "Un Pont sur la Bresles." The last four named paintings are illustrated herewith.

The following is a carefully prepared list of pictures by Van Marcke which have been sold at auction in this city since 1876:

At the John Taylor Johnstone sale of that date: "A Herd of French Cattle" (38×59), bought by Mr. R. C. Taft for \$5100, and "Landscape with Cattle" (14×21), bought by James Gordon Bennett for \$2550.

Albert Spencer sale, April, 1879: "Cows in a Pool" (16×10), by G. G. Haven, \$1225, and "Cattle in Meadow" (20×14), by Theron R. Butler, \$1800.

Sherwood-Hart sale, December, 1879: "In the Landes" (26×18), Philip Van Volkenburgh, \$925, and "Near Bordeaux" (58×41), Robert Goelet, \$2900.

J. Abner Harper sale, March, 1880: "Normandy Ox Team" (27×19), W. Connor, \$790; "Cows in a Pool" (16×12), Schaus, \$1375; "Normandy Cattle" (14×18), \$950, and "Landscape and Cattle" (48×36), \$3725.

John Wolfe sale, April, 1882: "Normandy Cow" (19×28), W. T. Walters, \$3050, and "Normandy Bull" (19×28), Aaron Healy, \$2200.

J. C. Runkle sale, March, 1883: "Coming Home" (20×12), \$2050.

H. L. Dousman sale, May, 1884: "Cattle" (45×32), \$2750.

George I. Seney sale, March, 1885: "Cows and Landscape" (18×15), John Beyers, \$1050; "La Vanne" (70×86), Frederick Layton (Milwaukee), \$7000, and "Normandy Cattle" (28×40), A. C. Kingsland, \$4550.

Mary J. Morgan sale, March, 1886: "Cows Drinking" (19×13), William Woodward, Jr., \$1325; "Spring Time"

(26×32), Mr. Williams, \$4275; "Cattle Reposing" (20×13), J. J. Wysong, \$2650; "Cows in a Pool" (24×19), J. S. Barnes, \$4550; "On the Cliffs" (38×28), Mr. Williams, \$4050; "Going to Pasture" (39×26), C. P. Huntington, \$8600; "The Mill Farm" (76×54), Mr. Quintard, \$11,500.

Wall & Brown sale, March, 1886: "Landscape and Cattle" (20×24), H. Kennedy, \$1525, and "Landscape and Cattle" (17×22), Edward Kearney, \$1800.

The English titles given are those in the catalogue of the sales.

When it is remembered that Van Marcke is further represented by one or more pictures in the galleries of Messrs. William Astor, Anthony J. Drexel, D. O. Mills, John T. Martin, John Hoey, Morris K. Jesup, Brayton Ives, Charles Stewart Smith, Mrs. H. E. Maynard, Mrs. Joseph Harrison, and hardly less than fifty others, it will be understood that, even if he works only for the American market, he must turn out his pictures with such amazing celerity that he can hardly do justice either to himself or to his patrons.

The curious fact that a duplicate of a study of cows signed by Van Marcke on a panel scarcely a foot long (bought in Paris by Mr. T. J. Briggs, of New York) was offered last spring at the Richard H. Halsted sale, led to the belief that one or the other of the panels must be a forgery, which belief, it may be remembered, was

earth Van Marcke himself and will show him up as a reproducer. He will be forced to acknowledge *both* paintings. For seven or eight years, save now and then, Van Marcke has been doing 'hack' work, utterly lacking original thought. To buy the recent works of the painters just now in vogue is to buy something utterly without life, verve, or artistic value. How can any one expect an artist to paint with 'novelty' who has the dealers clamoring for his work before it is dry, like a printer's devil for copy? Saving with their most important works—and these are reproduced much more frequently than the public generally knows—the bulk of the artists of high price, now in fashion, paint the same thing over and over again."

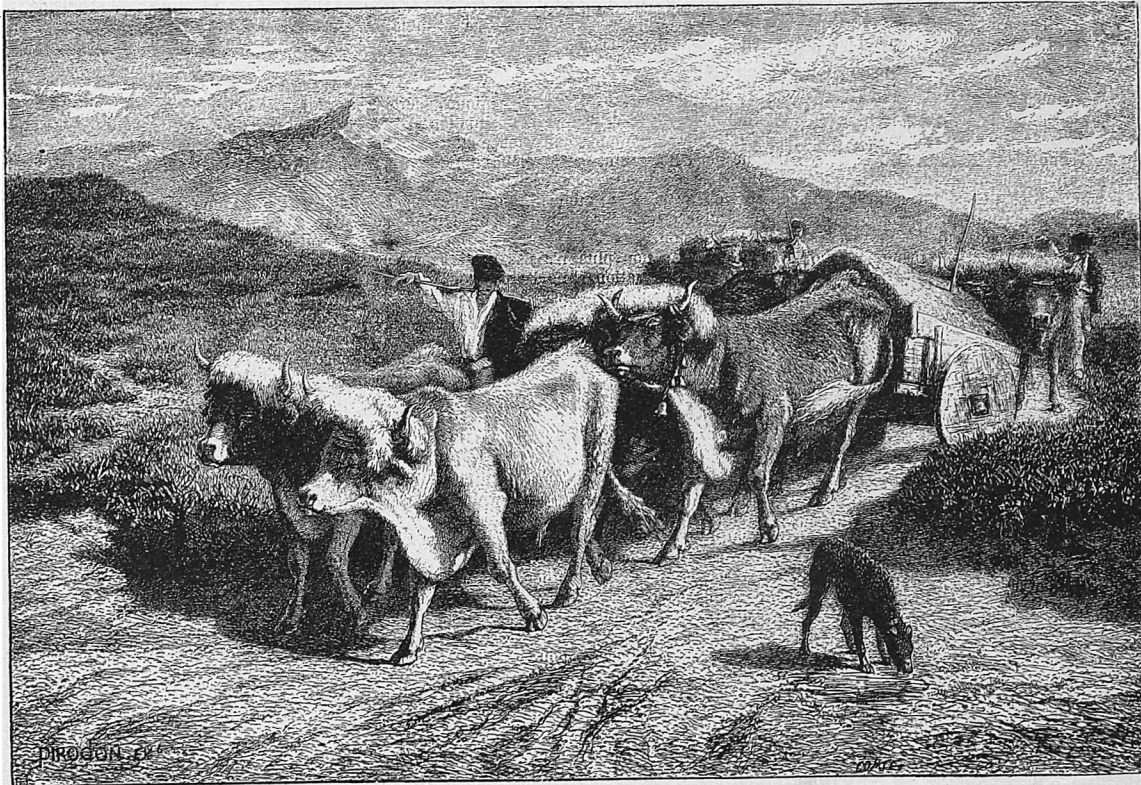
As a general rule, warm-tinted hair is made with cold tints, and cold hair with warm tints. This rule is applicable to all preparations; it would of itself suffice to guide the pupils whom nature has made colorists.

THE steady practice of painting from still-life cannot be too strongly urged on the beginner. Before undertaking difficult subjects, made more difficult by constant change of light, as in landscape, you should accustom yourself to things that remain unchanged for an indefinite time. See that the lighting of the object is as

uniform as possible. Stop work during fogs or any other great alteration of the lighting. On no account paint your object in full sunlight, as that is continually in movement. As a first lesson, you might take a plaster cast for a model (an old one by preference, as this is sure to have acquired a considerable variety of tones which are well adapted to try the skill of a beginner) and place it in a good light, with a simple background behind it. Having with your charcoal carefully outlined the object put your canvas in a good side-light where there is no shine upon its surface. Mix a color with the palette-knife to match any tints of the cast and hold up the palette-knife in front of it until the color on it can hardly be distinguished from the part of the object it is

desired to match. When you have obtained the right color try to match another tint in the same way and transfer it to its proper place on the canvas.

WHAT a study there is to be made of the odd collection of male and female copyists who people the galleries of the Louvre! Old women with gray curls bending over the rosy nudities of copies from Boucher—as it were Alecto illuminating the manuscript of Anacreon; yellow-skinned women with gray bibs and spectacles perched on the top of step-ladders hung with green serge to spare the modesty of their lean limbs; porcelain painters grimacing through a magnifying glass as they copy the entombment of Titian; little withered old men in black blouses, their hair parted in the middle, and looking like angelic dwarfs preserved in spirits of wine. What is the history of all these personifications of irony who have been cast at the feet of masterpieces by hunger, misery, want, or the desperation of a mistaken vocation? Poor ridiculous folk picking up the crumbs and alms of art at the feet of its gods. And yet these copyists must have their homes, their pleasures and their passions. They woo, we suppose, and marry, for have we not seen a touching and innocent declaration of love—two peaches placed by an unknown hand on the lid of an unguarded color-box?



"LES CHARROYEURS DE SABLE, A SAINT JEAN DE LUZ." FROM THE ETCHING BY PIRODON, AFTER THE PAINTING BY ÉMILE VAN MARCKE.

shared by the painter himself until he was shown the Halsted replica by the dealer who owned it, and, his memory being refreshed, he acknowledged having painted both the panels. When there was reason to suppose that Mr. Van Marcke was the victim of a forger, we undertook to catalogue his pictures in this country with a view to their verification. Scores of letters were received from collectors, giving particulars of their own pictures by this painter and telling from whom they bought them. In the mean while came Mr. Van Marcke's admission that he himself—who had declared to our Paris correspondent that he never made copies of his pictures except with the special permission of the owner—had actually made the copy in dispute of this conventional little study. Evidently it was useless to try to protect an artist who does not try to protect himself; and so the matter of verifying his pictures in this country was allowed to drop. One, however, of the letters we received seems particularly worthy of publication, not only because of the prophetic insight shown by its writer as to the final outcome of the investigation of the Briggs-Halsted dispute, but for the candid expression of opinion of an unusually intelligent collector as to the value of Mr. Van Marcke's more recent work. The gentleman referred to is Mr. John G. Johnson, of Philadelphia, who wrote as follows:

"My own feeling about the scandal is that it will un-

“UN PONT SUR LA BRESLES (NORMANDIE).” DRAWN BY CHARLES COUNTRY, AFTER THE PAINTING BY ÉMILE VAN MARCKE.





PEN-AND-INK STUDY OF GLADIOLI. BY VICTOR DANGON.

(FOR DIRECTIONS FOR TREATMENT, SEE PAGE 112.)